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(To be Concluded)

CHARLES KNAPP

## THE CLASSICAL ELEMENT IN THE GERMAN WAR PLAN OF 1914

It has always been a necessity for the European powers to keep war plans ready and up to date. France and Germany, the dominant Continental powers, were equally efficient in this matter. Their plans were accurate, certain and complete; at the same time, they showed great selfrestraint, and never tried to plan details beyond the moment of initial hostile contact. Up to that moment, each country was a free agent; there was no excuse for mistakes. At that moment, another independent will had to be reckoned with, and only a general idea of what was intended could be given to the field commander to guide his further operations. The idea of a fully worked out 'March to Paris' belongs to the era of Louis XIV and Louvois, not to the twentieth century.

The German system centered in the Emperor in his capacity of *Kriegsherr*, which term, be it noted, conveyed to the German no trace of the significance attributed in our newspapers to its literal translation, "War Lord". It suggested only the Emperor's position as head of the State in war, and corresponded very closely to our own description of our President as the Commander-in-chief of our land and naval forces. The war planning agency, under the Emperor, was the Great General Staff. This body had no administrative authority whatever. Its power was in no sense comparable to that exercised by our General Staff, which has absolute control over all the details of military administration not handled personally by the Secretary of War. Its business was with war plans and nothing else.

Its plans, of course, were based in theory at least upon an estimate of the political situation. The Elder Moltke was Chief of the General Staff from 1858 to 1888, through all the wars of the unification of the German Empire, and set the stamp of his personality firmly upon all the German war plans. His successor, Waldersee, held the post only three years, and had but little lasting influence; he is known to Americans chiefly as the commander of the German contingent in the China Relief Expedition, where our troops served with those of various European nations. Then came Schlieffen, who was chief for fifteen years, from 1891 to 1906. It is his contribution that we are to study here.

Moltke, like his American contemporary Grant, was an exponent of operations on exterior lines, as Napoleon was of operations on interior lines, that is to say, he habitually worked with several forces separated in space, and connected only by a common purpose, while Napoleon preferred to concentrate his forces before a battle and work with everything under his own hand. The instrument which Moltke used, and which Schlieffen found ready for use—the German army—was an integral part of German life. It was the product of the natural evolution of the German nation. Its spirit was that of Clausewitz, its great philosopher, Scharnhorst, its great organizer, and Moltke, its great strategist. Schlieffen brought to it the influence of another great genius, Hannibal; and Hannibal took his place



along with the others as the inspiration of the armies that took the field in 1914 to meet the successors of Napoleon and of Marlborough.

The disciple of Moltke recognized a kindred spirit in the man who planned and fought Cannae. In this battle, as in microcosm, Schlieffen recognized the principles of exterior lines. In a long series of studies he developed the idea strategically for the whole army. Both Moltke and Schlieffen deprecated any rigid system, and insisted upon the broadest eclecticism; but the logic of the situation of Germany seemed to justify the Moltke tradition. Cannae became the watchword of the German army of 1914.

Who, then, was Hannibal, and what was Cannae?

The civilization represented by him was commercial, of the most ruthless type of commercialism, but it was not military. There was no native military system; Carthage depended chiefly upon mercenaries, which, at the time, meant as a matter of course Greek mercenaries. Her own methods of warfare were copied from these mercenaries, specifically, perhaps, from one Xanthippus, who was invited to conduct her campaigns in the First Punic War.

The Barca family stood for all that was best in Carthaginian life. As opposed to the selfish commercialism of the other great families, it was inspired by patriotic ideals. Given the conditions of the times, this meant that it was military, for Carthage was facing a newcomer, supreme in her own regions, energetic, ambitious, and full of the military spirit engendered in her own wars of unification. The Barcas established in Spain, as a bulwark against Rome, a principality independent in all but name, bound to Carthage only through the loyalty of its rulers. Hannibal succeeded to this command in 221 B. C. His policy was aggressive from the first; he soon had control of the whole peninsula, and started on his famous march into Italy in 218. Wisely refraining from an attempt upon Rome herself, he moved down the east coast and established himself firmly in the south.

The consuls-elect for the year 216 were Lucius Aemilius Paulus and Gaius Terentius Varro. Aemilius was an experienced and conservative man, but his colleague, or, more properly, opponent, as Livy happily puts it, was a politician of no birth, breeding, or military skill. There was, it should be remembered, no Roman army properly speaking, only two consular armies. The problem of unity of command, of which we heard so much during the war with Germany, was an ever-present one to Rome, and, driven by necessity, she had worked out a solution for it, by establishing the custom of rotation in command, each consul holding command for a day. This was not a good solution, but where neither commander can give up his prerogatives entirely it is probably the best; at least, no better had been found in 1704, when Marlborough and Prince Louis of Baden, neither of whom could yield entirely to the other, agreed to adopt it for the Blenheim campaign. In this case, each consular army numbered four Roman legions, of 5,000 men each, with an equal force of allies. Hannibal knew of the dissensions between the consuls,

and knew also that two-thirds of the Romans were recruits; hence he sought battle, although inferior in numbers. Aemilius was unwilling; but at last Hannibal seized the Roman supply depot of Cannae, which gave him also control of the grain country of Apulia, where the harvest was just ripe.

Battle was now necessary, but both sides wanted it on favorable terms. Hannibal, with old soldiers and a large proportion of cavalry, tried to draw the Romans into the open field; Aemilius, with green troops and little cavalry, preferred broken ground. Varro, becoming impatient, took advantage of his day to draw nearer, and a partial action was fought, amounting to a draw, but claimed by Varro as a victory. The armies were now in too close contact to be withdrawn, and established themselves in entrenched camps, on the Aufidus River. After a short delay, Varro again took the initiative, and offered battle on ground of Hannibal's choosing.

Varro adopted an unusually deep and narrow formation; possibly the character of his force—large numbers and inferior training—caused him to revert more or less to the mass tactics of the phalanx, much as Napoleon did with similar armies. Both flanks were covered by cavalry. There was no thought of maneuver, simply of the strongest possible push straight to the front. Ten thousand men were left in the camps; those engaged were about 70,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry.

Hannibal, with only 40,000 infantry, extended in a single line, to avoid being outflanked; but his line was not uniformly thin. The center was made up of his Spanish and Gallic infantry, with inferior armament and in shallow formation; the flanks were of fully armored African troops in heavy formation. His cavalry wings were strong, numbering 10,000 men.

As the two forces advanced, Hannibal held back his Africans, so that his infantry line took the form of a wedge, or of a crescent convex toward the enemy. Thus the cavalry became hotly engaged on both flanks, and at the same time the Roman center struck the Spaniards and Gauls; in front of the Africans there was quiet. The Carthaginian cavalry was successful; hence the Roman infantry was unable to extend and envelop the enemy. On the contrary, it crowded inward, making the Roman formation also tend to the wedge shape.

This Roman wedge penetrated irresistibly. The African infantry closed upon its flanks, while Hannibal's center was pressed almost to the breaking point. But now the Carthaginian heavy cavalry closed in behind, forced the Roman rear ranks to turn, and brought the 'steam roller' to a stand. The Numidian light cavalry pursued the defeated Roman horse, and prevented them from interfering. Completely surrounded and too crowded to use its weapons, the Roman army was literally annihilated. Aemilius was among the killed; Varro escaped, with a few thousand men, to report his own disaster.

This astounding success—an inferior army enveloping both flanks of the superior enemy and winning—has

been a favorite study of military men ever since. It was superb audacity, justifiable only by the character of the two armies and of their commanders. It has been said that for a Cannae two things are necessary—a Hannibal and a Varro.

Germany in 1914 seemed always to be looking for an opportunity to apply the Cannae principle; but, faithful again to Moltke, who said that his only system was to have no system, the application was in varied forms. Schlieffen dared to use it strategically, in his conception of the great wheel of the armies of the right wing upon Metz as a pivot; but it was the application of a principle only, not the copying of a form. Hindenburg, when he took over the command in East Prussia, found himself opposed to two Russian armies. As Napoleon might have done, he disregarded *Rennenkampf* and turned his whole force upon *Samsonoff*; but his operations against *Samsonoff* were a repetition of Cannae on a large scale and with success as complete as Hannibal's. A recent German writer has said that if Schlieffen were to rewrite his studies to-day he would call them *Tannenberg*, not *Cannae*. Moltke the Younger was no Hannibal. He feared to weaken the rest of his line so as to give to his marching flank the strength that Schlieffen had contemplated; and so we shall never know whether, given a German Hannibal, France would have furnished a Varro.

OLIVER L. SPAULDING, JR.,  
Colonel, Field Artillery, United States Army

#### ON THE READING OF LATIN VERSE<sup>1</sup>

I am in hearty agreement with my friends Professor Samuel E. Bassett and Professor Charles Knapp on the unreality of the caesura in Latin verse, and on the desirability of making such pauses in the verses as are naturally in accord with the sense to be conveyed; see *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 18.73-79.

On the other hand I desire to call to the attention of the readers of this journal the fact that the disregard of elision, advocated by Professor Knapp, is a theory which has its reasoning opponents. Professor Edgar H. Sturtevant, now of Yale University, and the writer presented a fairly thorough study of this subject in the *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 46.129-155, under the title *Elision and Hiatus in Latin Prose and Verse*, and came to the conclusion, based on ancient evidence, that the elided vowel, or vowel plus *m*, was entirely ignored in the pronunciation; though in the time of Quintilian there was a school of readers who did sound the elided vowels, evidently in the fashion of the actors of to-day who in reading the lines of Shakespeare do their utmost to conceal the fact that the lines have rhythm. Our conclusions, I might add, were publicly endorsed by the late Professor Charles E. Bennett, of Cornell University. An abridgment of our article, by Professor Sturtevant, appeared in *The Classical Journal* 12.34-43.

It would be out of place here to repeat in detail what was said there. There are, however, three items on which I would remark.

<sup>1</sup>This paper was received after the material which appears in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 18.121-123 had been sent to the printer.  
C. K.

(1) Elision at the end of a verse, as in Horace, *Carm.* 2.6.3-4, and in all hypermetric verses, as in *Aeneid* 5.422, is a phenomenon quite on a par with the running over of a word from one line to the next, as in Horace, *Carm.* 1.2.19-20, where *ux-orius* is divided between the two lines. Similarly, a word should end in the Asclepiadean measures after each group—*—u—*, except the last such group; but this is violated in Horace, *Carm.* 2.12.25 *Cum flagrantia de-torquet ad oscula*, between the prefix and the verb, in *Carm.* 4.8.17 *Non incendia Car-thaginis impiae*, in the middle of a long place-name, and occasionally elsewhere. An elision occurs in Horace, *Carm.* 1.21.13 *Hic bellum lacrimosum*, *hic miseram famem*, at this point in the verse; there is an evident pause at this point required by the sense, despite the elision. But I see no reason why the musical time should be spoiled by the sounding of the elided element, especially when the ancient evidence is all against it; there is no more violence in having an omission of a final sound at a pause than in having a pause in the middle of a word.

(2) As for such pronunciations as *theternal* for the *eternal*, the writing *theternal* is not infrequent in older books, and cannot be motivated except as a representation of the pronunciation actually employed. The pronunciation *theternal* where the rhythm requires *theternal* is quite on a par with the pronunciation *fore-head* for *forehead* (quasi *forrud*), and is the result of an ocular impression.

(3) Finally, as to a pause, not to call it a caesura, after an *et*, as in *Aeneid* 1.35, I agree with Professor Knapp that a pause could not have been made properly after an *et*, but I am not sure that the Romans always restrained themselves from making a pause there, any more than from making a pause where there is elision or even between the elements of a compound word or between a word and an attached enclitic. In recent years many speakers of English have affected a long pause after an introductory *But*, a practice similar to a possible pause in Latin after an *et*, though equally to be condemned on theoretical grounds. But I do not believe that the Romans lived up to their theories perfectly, and hence believe that now and then they made pauses where they should not have done so. We moderns are too prone to regard all that is old and classical in Latin as perfect and free from fault: Horace rebuked the same attitude toward the past among his own contemporaries, *Epp.* 2.1.71-72. . . . *sed <carmina> Livi Andronici> emendata videri pulchraque et exactis minimum distantia miror. . . .* No writer, not even Vergil or Shakespeare, ever wrote his own language in large quantity one hundred per cent free from blemish; and we should not expect to find such absolute perfection anywhere.

I do believe that we must make the metrical accent an accent of energy, as Professor Knapp maintains; and I go farther than he, and maintain that the ancients likewise did so. As for the word-accent of prose, that is, of ordinary speech, formal or informal, I have good company in regarding it as chiefly a pronunciation of the syllable on a musical note of higher pitch; such a pitch accent may be pronounced irrespective of an accent of greater stress or energy, and the two accents may fall on the same or on different syllables, without any clash or difficulty, except for persons not accustomed to making such distinctions. See my articles *The Alleged Conflict of the Accents in Latin Verse*, and *The Educated Roman and his Accent*, in the *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 51.19-29, 53.63-72.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

ROLAND G. KENT